

Agricultural Conservation Mitigation Program (REF220044)



Monterey County Farm Bureau
September 20, 2022

Agricultural Mitigation Program

- Agricultural Land Mitigation Ordinance
 - Research & Outreach – Underway to be complete September 2022
 - Policy Workshops & Policy Drafting – October to December 2022
 - Final Ordinance – Early 2023
- Agricultural Buffer Ordinance – Pending Ag Mitigation Ordinance drafting

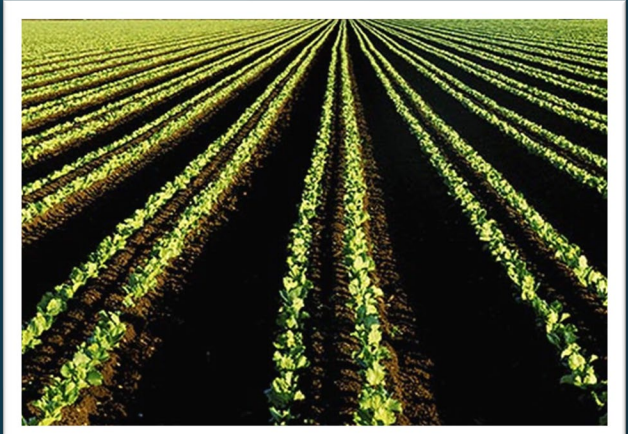
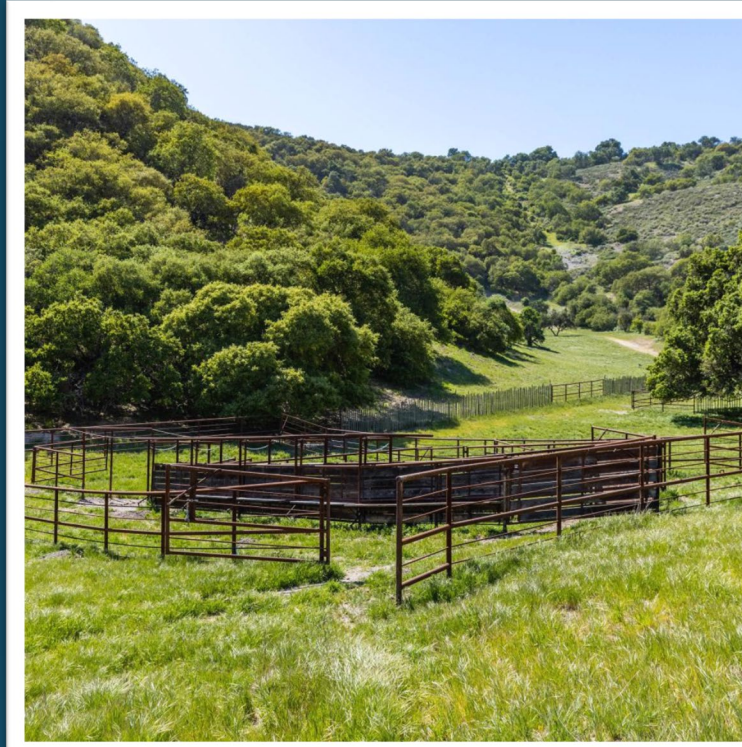


What does mitigation look like?

- Purchase of Permanent Agricultural Conservation Easement
- Payment of In-Lieu Fees
- Other (Select) Mitigation Tools
 - Conservation of Soil at Development Sites
 - Improve or Create Farmland via Preservation of Prime Soils

Policy Framework

- 2010 General Plan: Preserve, protect, and enhance farmland in order to maintain the productivity and viability of the County's agricultural industry.
- Agricultural Element: Promote the long-term protection, conservation and enhancement of productive and potentially productive agricultural lands.
- Agricultural Conservation Mitigation Program: Mitigate loss of farmland to development





Policy Input

- Key Definitions to be Developed
 - Prime Farmland
 - Development and Conversion
- Meaningful measure or “Value” of Loss of Agricultural Land
- Eligibility Criteria of Mitigation Receiving Site
- Exceptions or Other Considerations



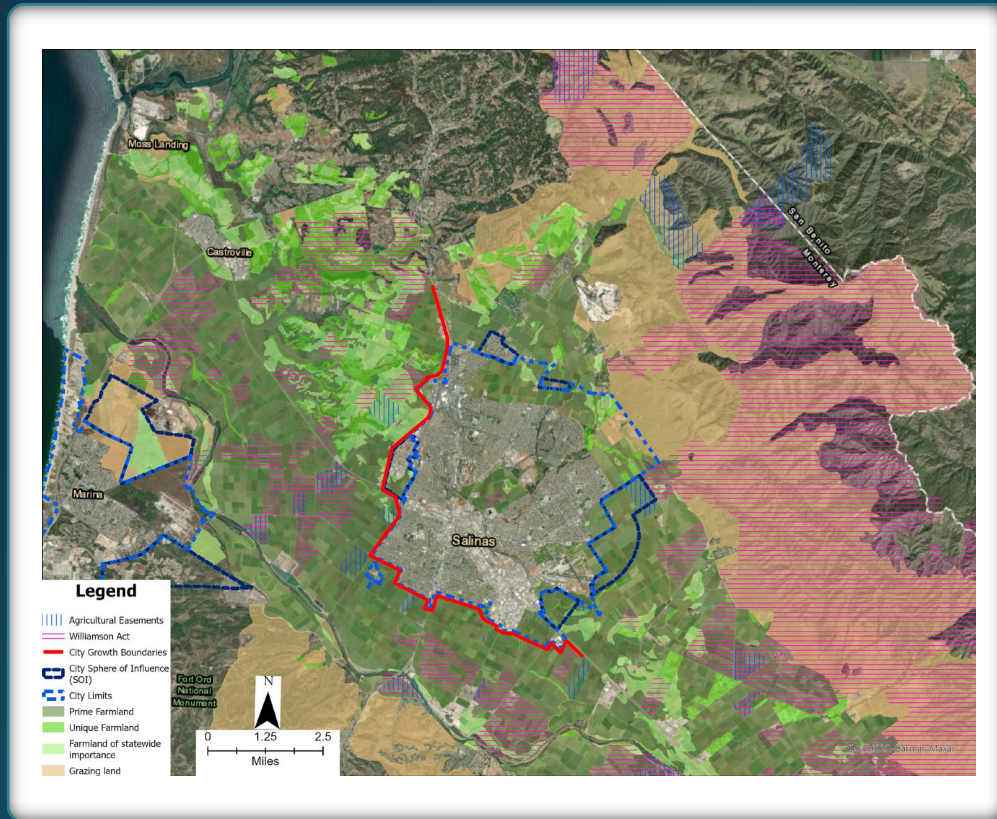
Policy Input

- Meaningful Measure or “Value” of Loss of Agricultural Land
 - Fair Market Value
 - Difference between the parcel’s value with development rights compared to an agricultural conservation easement without development rights.
 - Appraisal method(s) that account for water availability, soil conditions, and crop production
 - Gradient of Farmland
 - Prime Farmland
 - Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland and Locally Important
 - Grazing/Rangeland
 - Gradient of Mitigation Ratios

Farmland Category	Ratio
Prime	2 : 1
State/Unique/Local	1.5 : 1
Grazing/Rangeland	1 : 1

Policy Input

- Eligibility Criteria of Mitigation Receiving Site
 - Like for Like Classification (or better)
 - Location
 - Mitigate within Planning Area
 - If an edge property is near the Planning Area boundary, allow for a distance boundary as well?
 - Prioritize at or near the urban/ag boundary
 - City Sphere of Influence/Growth Boundary



Policy Input

- Exceptions and Other Considerations
 - Exemptions – Required by AG-1.12
 - Acreage within project/annexation used for inclusionary housing
 - Community Plan or Rural Center Plan that includes a mitigation program
 - Exemptions – Other
 - Agricultural Support Services/Facilities
 - Agricultural Worker and Families Housing
 - Do not exempt solar/renewable energy projects (except supporting ag operation)
 - Exemptions – For Consideration
 - Exempt acreage in required agricultural buffer?
 - Exempt public benefit portions of development, such as regional roads, parks, or open space?
 - Exempt acreage with water conservation/improvement projects that benefits ag?

Policy Input

- Exceptions and Other Considerations Continued
 - Thresholds for Easement (“good faith”) versus In-Lieu Fees
 - Easement Required (“good faith offer(s)”) – 5 acres or 20 acres minimum?
 - In-lieu Fee -
 - Projects smaller than the required direct conservation easement acre threshold
 - Easement Cannot be Acquired
 - For projects unable to acquire an easement (within the planning area or at all), should mitigation ratios or thresholds be increased?

Location	Acre Threshold	
	In-Lieu Fees	Direct Conservation Easements
Butte County	5 acres or less	5 acres or more
Yolo County	20 acres or less	20 acres or more
City of Woodland	20 acres or less	20 acres or more

Policy Input

- Exceptions and Other Considerations Continued
 - Timing of Mitigation
 - At time of entitlement
 - When development begins
- Other Complimentary Options to Help Meet Mitigation Requirements
 - High-density developments can reduce mitigation requirements by some amount?
 - Topsoil to improve or create new prime farmland at another site
 - Water conservation/improvement project that benefits ag – off site

Join the Discussion

To provide comments and feedback:

Or email - hcdcomments@co.monterey.ca.us

Questions?

Contact Melanie Beretti, AICP, Principal Planner

Phone | 831-755-5285 Email | berettim@co.monterey.ca.us